Sample Syllabus
WGSS 378 – Undergraduate Research and Creative Works Assistantship

Instructor:
Contact Info:
Office: 2101 Woods

WGSS 378, Undergraduate Research and Creative Works Assistant (URCA) provides an opportunity to develop an enhanced understanding of specific research methods and or creative practices; the overall goal is provide students with an understanding of how field contributions are made, either by crafting their own research contributions, or providing support for a faculty mentor's ongoing research.   Working alongside a faculty member in their area of expertise, the assigned URCA will have an opportunity to build their research (and or creative) skills, strengthen their understanding of the field; executing their responsibilities in a professional and ethical manner. The precise syllabus for the URCA will be personalized to the student's interests and abilities, as well as to the specific research (or creative) project and the faculty mentor's expectations. The following guidelines will shape the responsibilities and learning goals for the semester.

You MUST secure your faculty mentor's permission before enrolling ([Click for a link to our faculty and their areas of research and expertise](#)). This is a three-credit course, which means that you should expect to conduct approximately nine hours of work per week. Regardless of which course you have been assigned, students on completion of WMST 387 will be able to:
- Identify a viable research project. (Conceptualize an area for creative intervention)
- Expand their scholarly knowledge of a selected area of study. (Explore and practice the appropriate media and genres required for completion of task)
- Develop academic presentation and communication skills.
- Build capacity to act independently while conducting research (creative practice)
- Develop basic competence in one or more methods of research (and, or creative practice)
- Strengthen understanding and cogently discuss the ethical parameters of their field and selected area of research (or genre)

As a URCA, you will develop your knowledge base by providing support for a faculty-person as they engage in their research. In some instances, it may be possible to work on research that is distinctly and discretely yours, as you work alongside your faculty mentor. As a URCA, you can be asked to:

- Meet on a regular and consistent basis
- Keep a log of time and research (or studio) activities
- Source materials for your faculty mentor (electronic/physical library, on and off campus)
- Read and craft annotated entries on research materials
- Source research data on a specific theme.

- Undergo training to help facilitate data collection (e.g. software, qualitative fieldwork skills).
- Transcribe interviews, or type up research materials.
- Provide administrative support for faculty member's web-site or digital research platforms.

This work must not include:
- Teaching a faculty member's class or providing support for class preparation. If this is your preferred area of interest, please consider enrolling in WGSS 358.
- Grading connected to faculty-member's course assignment (exception, if the course is directly connected to on-going or future research).
- Personal tasks for the faculty of record.

Evaluation and grading
The terms of your assessment will be determined at the beginning of the semester by your research mentor. It may include an assessment of your performance and competence in tasks such as - writing a literature review, poster presentations, sourcing research materials, communicating data in a concise and intelligible format.

Possible Grade Allocation

Literature Review	*20%*
Annotated Bibliography	*20%*
Research Presentation	*10%*
Research Paper Final	*30%*
Weekly Meeting Prep, Time Log	*20%*

**WGSS 378 – Undergraduate Research and Creative Works Assistantship
Expectations Contract**

Please discuss and fill this form out with your URCA. On completion, please return to the department's Academic Advisor. This form MUST be completed before the student begins working with you on the course.

Instructor of Record	
Course	
URCA's Name	
Major	
Will the student conduct an independent research project, alongside faculty research? If so, please provide a statement that accounts for data usage and ownership.	e.g. You may wish to be explicit about author credits in the event of publications, use of materials for graduate school applications. Please see this as an opportunity to discuss academic integrity and data use.
Expectations • Data Management • Knowledge and Skills Acquisition • Scholarly Support • Logistical Support	e.g., maintain confidentiality e.g., establish list of readings and topics and skills that student will engage for the semester. e.g., meet with faculty for weekly assignment of tasks –sourcing materials, annotations, data entry e.g., photocopying, building research database, check technology, audio
Overview of University Policies	It is the faculty member's responsibility to ensure that the assigned URCA is aware of relevant university policies and the ethical parameters of conducting scholarly and creative research. These can include: Student Privacy

	  Academic Integrity Resources: The Writing Center, Writing a Conference Paper (UMD), How to Begin Your Research (UMD).
Signatures	Instructor of Record: Undergraduate Research Assistant:

Sample of Possible Readings

Altheide, D, Johnson, J Denzin, NK, Lincoln, Y. "Criteria for assessing interpretive validity in qualitative research." *Handbook of Qualitative Research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage

Bazeley, Pat. Analyzing qualitative data: More than 'identifying themes'. *Malaysian Journal of Qualitative Research*. 2.(2009).

Christians, C. Ethics and politics in qualitative research. In N. Denzin & Y. Lincoln (Eds.), Handbook of qualitative research (2nd ed., pp. 133-155), 2000. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage

Guillemin, Marilys and Lynn Gillam. "Ethics, Reflexivity, and "Ethically Important Moments" in Research" Qualitative Inquiry, Volume 10 Number 2, (2004) 261-280.

Russell, S. et. al. "Benefits of Undergraduate Research Experiences" *Science*. Vol. 316, 5824 (2007): 548-549.

Scharff, Darcell P et al. "More than Tuskegee: understanding mistrust about research participation." *Journal of health care for the poor and underserved* vol. 21,3 (2010).

Policy regarding Absences: Serving as a URCA/UTA is special because you hold a quasi-student/professional role. This semester you will provide vital support for my work, part of your professional responsibility is to show up and to be on time. Please secure my permission if you anticipate missing a scheduled meeting. If an absence becomes immediate and unavoidable, you must notify me with a detailed explanation for your absence within twenty-four hours of the scheduled meeting. This must be accompanied by appropriate and credible documentation. Unexcused absences will serve as grounds failing the course.

Academic integrity:
(https://www.president.umd.edu/sites/president.umd.edu/files/documents/policies/III-100A.pdf). The UMD Honor Code prohibits students from cheating on exams, plagiarizing papers, submitting the same paper for credit in two courses without authorization, buying

papers, submitting fraudulent documents and forging signatures. On every examination, paper or other academic exercise not exempted by the instructor, students must write by hand and sign the following pledge:

I pledge on my honor that I have not given or received any unauthorized assistance on this examination (or assignment).

Allegations of academic dishonesty will be reported directly to the Student Honor Council: http://www.shc.umd.edu

Accessibility and Disability Support: (https://www.counseling.umd.edu/ads/). Students with a documented disability should inform the instructors within the add-drop period if academic accommodations will be needed. NB: You are expected to meet with your instructor in person to provide them with a copy of the *Accommodations Letter* and to obtain your instructor's signature on the *Acknowledgement of Student Request* form. You and your instructor will plan together how accommodations will be implemented throughout the semester. To obtain the required Accommodation Letter, please contact Disability Support Service (DSS) at 301-314-7682 or dussup@umd.edu.

Copyright notice: Class lectures and other materials are copyrighted. They may not be reproduced for anything other than personal use without written permission from the instructor. Copyright infringements may be referred to the Office of Student Conduct.

Academic accommodations for students who experience sexual misconduct:
[http://www.president.umd.edu/administration/policies/section-vi-general-administration/vi-160a-0. You may consider using the following text from the Faculty Handbook:
The University of Maryland is committed to providing support and resources, including academic accommodations, for students who experience sexual or relationship violence as defined by the University's Sexual Misconduct Policy. To report an incident and/or obtain an academic accommodation, contact the Office of Civil Rights and Sexual Misconduct at 301-405-1142. If you wish to speak confidentially, contact Campus Advocates Respond and Educate (CARE) to Stop Violence at 301-741-3555. As 'responsible university employees' faculty are required to report any disclosure of sexual misconduct, i.e., they may not hold such disclosures in confidence. For more information: http://www.umd.edu/ocrsm/]